



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BUJ-FLORES (Mexico)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.5/35/SR.40  
4 December 1980

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 29: REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (continued)  
(A/35/30 and Corr.1, A/35/7/Add.15; A/C.5/35/37, 39 61)

1. Mr. HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic), noting that the International Civil Service Commission had drawn attention in paragraph 14 of its report (A/35/30) to the implications for the harmonization of personnel practices in the common system of the General Assembly's decision concerning repatriation grants, asked for information on the practice followed by other organizations within the common system in the payment of repatriation grants to staff members who had separated from service on or since 1 January 1980.
2. His delegation supported the recommendation, in paragraph 101 of the report, concerning the consolidation of 30 points of post adjustment into the base salary. At the same time, it looked forward to the results of the Commission's consideration of the staff assessment system in general and possible alternatives to it.
3. He agreed with the Commission's view that the practice of supplementary payments made to international civil servants by Governments was unnecessary, inappropriate and undesirable, as well as being inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter. If the practice continued, the consequences for the morale of the international civil service would be serious.
4. Pleasing progress had been made in the Commission's review of the post adjustment system despite the complexities involved, and it was to be hoped that specific proposals and recommendations deriving from the work of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions would be submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. It seemed that the Organization was experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff members to work in New York and in transferring staff members from duty stations in Europe to Headquarters, largely owing to the inadequacy of the post adjustment payable in New York. ACPAQ should address that issue on a priority basis.
5. FICSA had requested that the question of extending the education grant to staff not currently entitled to it should be reconsidered. His delegation would support some such subsidy to General Service staff members holding G-4 visas, who had to return to their own countries upon completion of their assignment at the United Nations.
6. While he appreciated the work that the Commission had put into personnel policies and the development of the Master Standard for job classifications, he wondered whether the effort had been justified in view of the job classification system which the United Nations had developed over recent years at great expense. The organizations within the common system varied greatly in size and responsibilities, and an attempt to apply a single master standard might cause them considerable difficulties; he understood that difficulties had already arisen in the case of language posts.

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(Mr. Hamzah, Syrian Arab Republic)

7. The development and application of recommendations on performance appraisal, career development and inter-organization exchange programmes would be of genuine assistance in fostering an international civil service of the highest standard. While his delegation was satisfied with the progress the Commission had made in those areas, it felt that work should continue on a priority basis. In particular, the Commission should study the organization of competitive examinations or alternative selection procedures, as required under article 14 (c) of its statute, and submit appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

8. His delegation emphatically maintained that action by the Fifth Committee on any of the Commission's recommendations must not in any way discriminate against new staff members. In conclusion, it wished to know whether the working group of ACPAQ referred to in paragraphs 142 and 143 of the report had yet been set up and at what stage concrete recommendations could be expected to emerge from it.

9. Mr. FALL (Mauritania) said that, while his delegation was glad to learn that ICSC was now tackling all its statutory responsibilities, it noted that the Commission had been constrained to concentrate on details of the working conditions in the international civil service rather than on the fundamental question of the establishment of a career structure for the entire United Nations system. It was particularly important to phase in the common job classification standards that the Commission had already prepared. Unified salary scales meant nothing unless they were based on unified classification standards, so as to ensure equal pay for equal work. Member States were entitled to expect the organizations of the United Nations system to honour the guidelines and policies proposed by the Commission rather than to look for "special circumstances" to justify exceptions. Disparate practices within the system could then be eliminated.

10. His delegation supported the concept of a career international civil service. A service composed of temporarily seconded staff retaining their ties to the seconding countries would be nothing more than an intergovernmental entity and would lack the continuity that a career civil service offered.

11. The Commission had made laudable efforts to define the principles of career development within the Organization on an objective and non-discriminatory basis, allowing for staff mobility within the system. His delegation was particularly anxious for ICSC to continue its investigation of performance appraisal methods, and looked forward with interest to the eventual proposals on the subject. In the same context, it wished to stress that failure to ensure that appointments and promotions were made on the basis of appropriate considerations posed a threat to the existence of an international civil service based on merit.

12. In the light of the Commission's efforts to ensure that salaries for staff in the Professional category and above were neither lower nor higher than those of the best-paid national civil service, action by any Member State to improve on the conditions of employment of its nationals, by supplementary payments or other means, was quite inappropriate, and he would support a general appeal by the Fifth Committee to all Member States to desist from making such payments. In view of the

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(Mr. Fall, Mauritania)

Commission's statutory obligation to make recommendations on recruitment, he suggested that it should be asked to study the question of competitive examinations.

13. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) said that the Commission had, since its creation, confined its attention to rectifying the worst anomalies in the salary scales and benefits of staff in the United Nations system. In so doing, it had made the first moves towards a radical reform, which was, by its own estimation, both desirable and necessary. It should without further delay indicate to the General Assembly the directions which such a reform should take.

14. In his delegation's opinion, the reform should ensure, first, respect for the Hoblemaire principle, according to which the conditions of service of the international staff should be such as to attract citizens of the country with the highest pay levels. It was important not to lose sight of the fact that the principle referred to conditions of service, not to remuneration alone. The Commission must undertake an over-all comparison of conditions of service in the United Nations and the comparator civil service instead of proposing piecemeal and often expensive measures, the utility of which was obscure. Application of the Hoblemaire principle had become grossly distorted, particularly in the higher echelons of the international civil service, where net remuneration was often more than double that paid by the comparator service.

15. The second aim of the reform should be to equalize remuneration and conditions of service for staff members of all nationalities at all duty stations. His delegation did not feel that the current post adjustment system was working properly: it had prevented the restoration of a much-needed balance between salaries on opposite sides of the Atlantic and was responsible for the fact that the post adjustment alone paid to high-ranking staff members in Geneva was greater than the total earnings of members of the Professional category. His delegation shared the views voiced by the representatives of Austria, Pakistan and the United States. The United States representative's suggestion concerning calculation of the cost of living for post adjustment purposes merited the Committee's urgent attention. Moreover, the current system made for excessive burdens on Member States, owing to the rapid growth in pensionable remuneration that resulted from it.

16. The third goal of the reform should be to moderate the level of over-all remuneration, particularly at the highest levels, while respecting the Hoblemaire principle. In his own country, cabinet members and parliamentary representatives had just taken a 5-per-cent reduction in their comparatively modest salaries and benefits, and all civil service salaries exceeding \$US 1,200 per month had been frozen. Yet, pensionable remuneration for United Nations staff at the D-1 level and above had nearly doubled in six years, and the contributions that Member States were obliged to make towards their pensions exceeded, in some cases, the frozen salaries of many Belgian civil servants. While the Organization was looking for ways to prevent three quarters of the world's population from sinking deeper into hardship and poverty, maximum pension benefits for international civil servants had been raised from 60 to 65 per cent of their final average remuneration, and net

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(Mr. Pirson, Belgium)

salaries in New York at the D-2 level were 50 per cent higher than in the comparator civil service; owing to the post adjustment system, net salaries in Geneva were 45 per cent higher still. The consolidation of 30 points of post adjustment into base salaries would entail a considerable increase in benefits of several kinds, an unwarranted increase in the highest pensions paid, higher contributions by Member States to the Joint Staff Pension Fund and the application of cost-of-living increases to higher base salary levels.

17. His delegation had already suggested that an upper limit to pensions should be set at the D-2 level and had warned that the creation of privileged groups was frowned upon in modern society. International civil servants should of course enjoy dignified conditions of service, superior to those obtainable in the comparator civil service. But remuneration in the international civil service had improved markedly over that in the comparator civil service, and top salaries for General Service staff in Geneva were now higher than the top salaries payable to Swiss civil servants. The Commission must make a detailed comparison of conditions of service in the international and comparator civil services and present its conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee. It was vital for Member States to learn the facts.

AGENDA ITEM 91: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIIUM 1980-1981

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee in document A/C.1/35/L.34 concerning agenda item 36  
(A/35/7/Add.14; A/C.5/35/77)

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee in document A/C.1/35/L.7 concerning agenda item 44  
(A/35/7/Add.14; A/C.5/35/78)

18. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) explained that the fifteenth report of the Advisory Committee (A/35/7/Add.14) dealt with two statements of administrative and financial implications (A/C.5/35/77 and 78) submitted by the Secretary-General in connexion with the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/35/L.34 and A/C.1/35/L.7 respectively.

19. The adoption by the General Assembly of the document entitled "Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade" (A/C.1/35/L.34) would have financial implications, in 1981 and 1982, relating to information activities. The Secretary-General had indicated that he intended to sponsor three seminars, two of which would be held in 1981, at Mexico City and Nairobi respectively; the third would be held at Bangkok in 1982. Funds for the third seminar would be considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In addition, the Secretary-General intended to issue disarmament fact sheets and to sponsor an international poster competition. According to the Secretary-General, expenditure for the two seminars to be held in 1981 would total \$88,400. The Advisory Committee had examined that request and, for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 of its report, had concluded that the amount of \$60,000 should be adequate to cover the cost of the two seminars.

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(Mr. Mselle, ACABQ)

20. With respect to the proposed publication of eight issues of disarmament fact sheets, after seeking additional information from the representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee felt that the same effect could be achieved by issuing only four fact sheets during 1981. Should the Secretary-General deem it necessary to issue more, the additional expenditure should be absorbed. The Advisory Committee was consequently recommending a reduction of \$53,600 in the Secretary-General's estimate. The same approach had been adopted with respect to the sponsoring of the international poster competition. With prudent management of the programme, the Advisory Committee believed that an amount of \$20,000 should prove adequate.

21. The Secretary-General had requested that one P-5 and one G-4/3 post should be authorized under temporary assistance for information activities. However, in view of the staff resources already available to the Centre for Disarmament and the Department of Public Information, the Advisory Committee could only recommend approval of a lump-sum provision of \$40,000 at the present stage. As members would see from paragraph 9 of its report, the Advisory Committee had recommended that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution in document A/C.1/35/L.3<sup>h</sup>, an additional appropriation of \$150,000 would be required under section 2B and \$20,000 under section 27 of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981. In addition, conference-servicing requirements in an estimated amount of \$79,600 would be considered in the context of the consolidated statement of conference-servicing requirements.

22. Paragraphs 10 to 15 of the report (A/35/7/Add.14) dealt with the financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.7, which, if adopted, would launch the preparatory work for the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Conference-servicing requirements for 1981 had been estimated at \$1,192,000. Summary record coverage would be requested for the preparatory work, which would require an explicit exception to the recent General Assembly resolution adopted on the subject (35/10 B), rather than to resolution 34/50 as stated in paragraph 12. In addition, the Secretary-General had indicated a requirement for temporary assistance posts at an estimated cost of \$156,300. However, as the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph 14 of its report, given the staff resources already available to the Committee and Conference Services Section of the Centre for Disarmament, it recommended approval of only 12 work-months at the P-4 level and 12 work-months at the General Service level, at an estimated cost of \$65,100 net.

23. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.7, an additional appropriation of \$65,100 would be required under section 2B of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, plus an amount of \$15,000 for staff assessment under section 31, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1.

24. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) requested clarification from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee as to the significance of the lump-sum provision recommended in paragraph 8 of its report. He further requested a statement from the Secretariat on the impact of the reduction of \$53,600 being recommended in connexion with the publication of the disarmament fact sheets.

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25. Mr. MSHALL (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) explained that the Secretary-General would apply the amount of \$40,000 to the financing of information activities as he deemed appropriate. The Advisory Committee had looked at the staff resources currently available to the Secretary-General and had decided that an amount of \$40,000 should be adequate to finance the activities for which the extra temporary assistance posts were being requested. He did not think he could be more specific than that.

26. Mr. PAL (India) said that he shared the confusion of the representative of Pakistan. Rather than recommend a lump-sum provision, it seemed to him that the Advisory Committee should either have come to the conclusion that the extra posts were unnecessary or that they should be at a lower level. It was difficult to understand why it had approved a lump-sum amount which did not seem to be related to any particular level of posts. The figure mentioned by the Secretary-General undoubtedly referred merely to the emoluments of the two posts requested.

27. Mr. MSHALL (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) explained that, in considering the Secretary-General's request, account had been taken of the fact that the posts requested were only temporary. The Advisory Committee often reduced the amount of temporary assistance requested by the Secretary-General, based on its own analysis of the situation with respect to existing staff resources. In the case in point, it had not found justification for recommending a full 12 work-months for each temporary assistance post. The lump-sum provision could be used either to finance a P-3 post for 12 months or, if the Secretary-General deemed fit, he could recruit at the P-5 level and absorb the additional costs. The Secretary-General would apply the lump-sum provision in whatever way he deemed fit.

28. Mr. AWOKOYA (Nigeria) echoed the questions raised by the representatives of Pakistan and India, and suggested that it might be helpful to call upon a representative of the Secretary-General to shed some light on the matter, particularly with respect to the practice that had been followed for similar seminars during the first Decade.

29. Mr. MARTINSON (Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament) said that he had no wish to enter into polemics with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee but felt that he must shed some light on the situation. The requirements had been conscientiously determined and agreed by the Centre for Disarmament, as the substantive unit responsible, and by the Office of Financial Services. Strict account had been taken of the current workload of the Centre. Although the General Assembly had authorized additional posts to permit the Centre to implement an extensive programme of information, studies and conferences, no additional posts had in fact been requested previously. The additional workload resulting from the decisions taken at the thirty-third and thirty-fourth sessions of the General Assembly had been absorbed, albeit with some difficulty. Everything possible had been done to fulfil the Centre's mandate without requesting any additional staff for the biennium 1980-1981, despite the fact that it was currently responsible for servicing, not only the First Committee of the General Assembly, but also the Committee on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, the

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(Mr. Martenson)

Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies and some 10 or 11 expert groups which were undertaking studies requested by the General Assembly. In addition, it ran the seminars in connexion with the fellowships on disarmament. The number of meetings had increased by 110 per cent and the volume of documentation by 170 per cent. For the period 1979-1980 the number of studies under way was equal to the number carried out over the previous 10-year period 1969-1979. The Centre was one of the smallest units, with one of the heaviest workloads.

30. The request for additional temporary assistance covered two major activities which were beyond the current capacity of the Centre in terms of finance and staff resources. Those modest requests had been determined with careful regard to the need for austerity. In connexion with the first Decade, three P-5 posts and three General Service posts had been granted.

31. Referring to paragraph 5 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/35/7/Add.14), he said that, while it was correct that the estimates in question corresponded to activities already provided for in the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981, that provision had been only \$10,000 for disarmament week and conferences and meetings of non-governmental organizations. In addition, the figure of 25 representatives for each seminar was firm, not tentative as stated by the Advisory Committee. Likewise, the subjects had been chosen. However, they could only be finalized in the light of the prevailing situation in the particular region at the time. The sum of \$117,400 for external printing and translation mentioned in paragraph 6 of the Advisory Committee's report was for specific publications approved by the Publications Board; that did not allow for any flexibility or diversion to new publications. Furthermore, with respect to the sum of \$106,000 for consultants mentioned in paragraph 8, he must point out that most of those funds had already been committed.

32. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that, in normal circumstances, his delegation would have preferred to postpone consideration to allow further consultations among delegations, in the light of the statements that had been made. Had the documentation been received earlier and had there not been a shortage of time because of the timetable of plenary meetings of the General Assembly, it might perhaps have been possible to do something to reverse the very severe reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee, particularly in paragraph 6 of its report. Given the lack of time, the Committee was in a very difficult position. His delegation would, therefore, reluctantly support the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

33. Mr. KRYEZIU (Yugoslavia) said that, in view of the extreme importance of the matters dealt with in the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.34, his delegation felt that the Secretary-General's requests in document A/C.5/35/77 were fully justified. Accordingly, if the matter was put to the vote, his delegation would not support the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

34. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he was surprised at the approach taken by some delegations and by the representative of the Secretary-General in trying to refute the well-reasoned recommendations of the Advisory

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(Mr. Palamarchuk, USSR)

Committee. He had no idea who had authorized the Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament to assert that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were incorrect; for his part, he could certainly assert that the requests made by the Assistant Secretary-General were unwarranted and unjustified. He wondered by what right the Assistant Secretary-General criticized the conclusions of an authoritative body.

35. His delegation was satisfied that the Advisory Committee had had the necessary evidence on which to base its recommendations. Indeed, it was none other than the Assistant Secretary-General himself who had provided that information. To try now to deny it was dishonest. Some members of the Secretariat, like the Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament, were seeking to demoralize the Fifth Committee, and to induce it to overturn the Advisory Committee's recommendations. The representatives of the Secretary-General had no right to lobby against the well-founded conclusions of the Advisory Committee; the Fifth Committee should act reasonably and resolutely by endorsing the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

36. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that the situation was not really as bad as it seemed. Delegations, of course, expressed their own views, and it had been at the request of some delegations that the Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament had made a statement. It could not be said that he had lobbied against the Advisory Committee's recommendations, since the relevant documents had been issued only that morning. Such criticism of the Secretariat was entirely unfounded.

37. It was his understanding that the representative of Yugoslavia had not formally requested that the Secretary-General's estimates should be put to a vote. He had merely stated that, if they had been put to a vote, he would have supported them and not the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. He himself (the representative of Pakistan) had said that he was reluctant to go along with the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.34.

38. Mr. KRYEZIU (Yugoslavia) confirmed the interpretation which the representative of Pakistan had given to his earlier statement.

39. Mr. MARTENSON (Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament) said that he, too, was surprised by the Soviet representative's statement. As an international civil servant, he was objective, neutral and loyal to the United Nations alone. He had stated clearly that his intention was not to enter into polemics with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee but rather to throw some light on the issue before the Fifth Committee. The First Committee had requested the Centre for Disarmament to carry out a number of activities; he had a duty to inform the General Assembly that those activities could not be carried without additional funds. He had confined his remarks to that point alone.

40. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the light of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.34, an additional appropriation of \$150,000 would be required under section 23 and an additional appropriation of \$20,000 under section 27 of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981. In addition, an

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(The Chairman)

amount of \$3,000 for staff assessment would have to be appropriated under section 31, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1. Conference servicing requirements not exceeding \$79,600 for 1981 would be reflected in the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the current session.

41. It was so decided.

42. Mr. PAPENDORF (United States of America) said that, while his delegation understood the time constraints posed by the consideration in plenary meeting of the resolutions submitted by the First Committee, it was seriously concerned that the Fifth Committee had been required to consider the financial implications of those draft resolutions at such short notice. The relevant documents had been made available only that morning, and his delegation had not had an adequate opportunity to consider them and formulate its position. If the matter had been to a vote, his delegation would have been constrained to abstain. His delegation took a similar position with regard to the recommendations concerning the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.7.

43. He commended the Advisory Committee's efforts to reduce the financial burden of the activities called for under the resolutions submitted by the First Committee. The statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Disarmament notwithstanding, his delegation's general view was that the Secretariat should strive for zero budgetary growth and that additional costs should be absorbed through savings and the reallocation of appropriations already approved.

44. Mr. PAL (India) thanked the representative of Nigeria for having requested clarification from the Secretariat. The Committee had at last received a clear and intelligible explanation of the situation. His delegation had been unable to make any specific proposal on the basis of the Advisory Committee's report, which contained insufficiently justified recommendations for reductions in the amounts requested by the Secretary-General. It had, therefore, gone along with the Advisory Committee's recommendations, although it deeply deplored a situation in which the Fifth Committee had been compelled to take a decision with regard to sizable financial implications without a full knowledge of the facts and without having had an opportunity to carry out the necessary consultations.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that he shared the concerns expressed by delegations over the conditions under which the Fifth Committee had had to take its decision. However, it was imperative for the plenary Assembly to take up the following day the resolutions recommended by the First Committee.

46. Mr. PALAMARCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, although his delegation had supported the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee, it believed that the Advisory Committee had not gone far enough. Adequate resources had already been appropriated under the programme budget for 1980-1981 to carry out the activities requested in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.34. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to exercise the utmost financial prudence in spending the additional appropriations just authorized.

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47. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) said that his delegation had gone along with the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the understanding that the Centre for Disarmament would carry out its work in a capable and efficient manner and without sacrificing productivity despite the reductions made in the amounts requested.

48. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that, after consultations with the officers of the General Assembly, it had been decided that the plenary Assembly would defer its consideration of the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee in document A/C.1/35/L.7 until Wednesday, in order to allow the Fifth Committee to carry out additional consultations on the financial implications. In the interest of expediting the Committee's work, he invited the representative of Pakistan to put forward the formal proposal of his delegation with regard to that draft resolution.

49. Mr. KEMAL (Pakistan) said that his delegation was convinced that the Advisory Committee's recommendations in paragraphs 13 and 14 of its report (A/35/7/Add.14) with regard to staffing for the preparatory committee for the second special session devoted to disarmament were inadequate. Bearing in mind the importance of the Preparatory Committee's work, his delegation proposed that the Fifth Committee should approve two additional posts, over and above those recommended by the Advisory Committee, one of which should be at the P-5 level and the other a General Service post. The Advisory Committee had referred in its report to the existing staff resources of the Centre for Disarmament, but those resources were already fully committed to servicing the already heavy workload of the Centre and could not possibly be redeployed.

United Nations accommodation at Nairobi (A/35/7/Add.11; A/C.5/35/35 and Add.1)

50. Mr. NJUGUNA (Kenya) said that his delegation could not support the proposal in the report of the Executive Director of UNEP (A/C.5/35/35/Add.1) to delay the construction of the approved project in Nairobi, for which funds had been appropriated more than 12 months earlier. The Executive Director had based his proposal on General Assembly resolution 34/228. That resolution had been adopted at the same session of the General Assembly as resolution 34/233, which authorized the construction of additional facilities at Nairobi. If the adoption of resolution 34/228 had meant that all work in progress should be halted, surely there would have been no need to appropriate additional funds. What resolution 34/228 in fact did was simply to request the Secretary-General to review existing procedures for the award of contracts and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. There was, however, no suggestion in the Executive Director's report that it was the report requested in that resolution.

51. The concern felt by the General Assembly over the increasing costs of construction projects was shared by all countries, whether developing or developed. Rising costs were a problem everywhere and it was unrealistic to focus efforts to control costs on only one project. Economy was a permanent concern for all who handled public funds at the national and international levels. The Executive Director was calling for new architectural designs at considerable cost, all in the name of effecting savings. Without any evidence, the Executive Director assumed that the Kenyatta Conference Centre would continue to be available for

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(Mr. Hjuguna, Kenya)

UNEP meetings for some time to come. The Executive Director also assumed that the pattern of meetings over the preceding seven years in Nairobi was a reliable basis for projecting future requirements and that the fact that the two small liaison offices maintained by the World Bank and UNHCR preferred to remain in the city centre was enough to justify a substantial reduction in the office space to be constructed. Those assumptions did not stand up to close scrutiny.

52. The Government of Kenya had made a commitment to the United Nations regarding the availability of the Kenyatta Conference Centre in 1977. However, as the Advisory Committee had noted at that time, whereas the needs of UNEP for large conference facilities were expected to grow, the Kenyatta Conference Centre would become available less frequently in view of the increasing number of trade conventions and other functions being held there. The management of the Kenyatta Conference Centre had indicated at that time that it would require two years' advance notice for all UNEP bookings from 1980 onwards and that after 1982 the host Government could not assure UNEP that the Centre could be made available to UNEP as and when needed. That continued to be the position of his Government, which had neither been consulted on the matter nor made any commitment beyond 1982. The United Nations, for its part, had given an undertaking that the project at Nairobi would be completed by 1982, and it should not renege on that commitment without due regard for the position of the other parties.

53. The number of meetings held at the Kenyatta Conference Centre over the preceding seven years had been determined, in part, by the lack of United Nations facilities at Nairobi and was therefore a poor basis on which to conclude that the same trend would continue after the UNEP facilities had been constructed. Moreover, the office space requirements of the World Bank and UNHCR at Nairobi were a minor factor in determining the amount of permanent office space required by the United Nations. In any event, whenever meetings took place in Nairobi in future, the United Nations staff servicing such meetings must be given office space from which to conduct official business.

54. His delegation found no convincing reason in the report of the Executive Director of UNEP for reducing the already modest facilities approved by the General Assembly in resolution 32/208. For an alleged saving of 15 per cent of the cost of the project, the United Nations was being asked to forgo valuable office and conference facilities amounting to 20 per cent of the space originally authorized. The loss of time and services which would result if the Executive Director's proposal was accepted and the extra costs resulting from inflation over the period must also be taken into account. As a general rule, it was better to err on the side of more space than less at the initial stage of any construction project since extensions or additions were always more costly, resulted in greater inconvenience and were less satisfactory.

55. The construction of United Nations accommodation at Nairobi had been subjected to unorthodox methods of planning and execution. As host country, Kenya considered it its duty to state that the only United Nations centre in a developing country should not be subjected to the kind of treatment proposed by the Executive Director. His delegation therefore suggested that the report of the Executive Director should be set aside and that a fresh mandate should be given by the General Assembly so that work on the project could proceed as contemplated by resolution 32/208 and 34/233. His delegation intended to submit a draft resolution to that effect.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.